



News From

# JUDY BIGGERT

CONGRESSWOMAN ♦ 13<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT ♦ ILLINOIS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **BIGGERT: HOUSE PASSES BILL PROVIDING \$136 MILLION TO FUND ENERGY EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION ACT**

*Argon Beryllium Victims Aided*

**Clarendon Hills, Illinois** – The House passed an appropriations bill late Thursday that will provide \$136 million to fund the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), U.S. Representative Judy Biggert (R-13<sup>th</sup>) announced this morning.

“These federal funds will finance a program near to the hearts of many former nuclear weapons industry employees and their families who dedicated years of their lives to building up our nation’s nuclear program,” said Biggert. “The very least we can do is make sure they are compensated for their suffering and sacrifices.”

The bill, Fiscal Year 2002 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations (H.R. 3061), now goes to the Senate for consideration in the coming weeks.

Signed into law in October 2000, the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act pays medical expenses and lump-sum compensation to employees who are seriously ill because they were exposed to radiation, beryllium or silica while working in the nuclear weapons industry. Compensation also will be available to survivors in certain instances, and to uranium employees who received benefits under the Radiation Compensation Act.

The Department of Energy estimates that up to 2,300 people in Illinois, mostly at Argonne National Laboratory, were exposed to beryllium during the two decades ending in 1963, during which the metal was used in an atomic program. Former employees who were exposed at the Blockson-Olin plant in Joliet may also be eligible for compensation.

Last week, Biggert signed a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee urging an end to age restrictions in the Act that prevent some victim’s children from receiving compensation under the Energy Employees Compensation Act. The law now says eligibility is limited to children who were under 18 years old or full-time students under 23 years old when their parent died of causes that make them eligible for federal compensation.

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